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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

STATE OF NEVADA, <i>et al.</i> ,)	Case No. 3:15-cv-00491-MMD-VPC
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	DECLARATION OF THOMAS FRANCE
vs.)	IN SUPPORT OF THE WILDERNESS
)	SOCIETY, ET AL.'S MOTION TO
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT)	INTERVENE
OF THE INTERIOR, <i>et al.</i> ,)	
)	
Defendants, and)	
THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY, <i>et</i>)	
<i>al.</i> ,)	
)	
Applicants in Intervention/)	
Defendants)	

1 I, Tom France, make the following declaration:

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3 1. This declaration is based on my personal knowledge, information and
4 belief.

5 2. I am a resident of Missoula, Montana. I am over the age of eighteen years
6 and suffer from no legal incapacity.

7 3. I work for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), serving as Senior
8 Director for Western Wildlife Conservation in NWF's Northern Rockies and Pacific
9 Regional Center in Missoula, Montana. In that capacity, I help direct NWF's efforts
10 to encourage congressional, administrative and legal actions to conserve fish and
11 wildlife habitat and sustainable fish and wildlife populations across the West. I
12 have been deeply engaged in fish and wildlife conservation for more than 30 years.
13 Most recently I have played a leadership role in NWF's campaign to secure
14 consistent objectives and conservation measures for the protection of greater sage-
15 grouse and its habitat into relevant state and federal policies and land management
16 plans.

17 4. NWF was created in 1936 after J.N. Ding Darling, an avid waterfowl
18 hunter and Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist, convinced President Franklin D.
19 Roosevelt to invite more than 2,000 hunters, anglers and conservationists from
20 across the country to the first North American Wildlife Conference in Washington,
21 D.C. Since its inception, NWF has worked to amplify the voices of sportsmen and
22 women, alongside diverse constituencies of other wildlife and outdoor enthusiasts,
23 to achieve the common goal of protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat for
24 all species.

1 5. At that conference, the General Wildlife Federation (later changed to the
2 National Wildlife Federation) was formed with the idea of uniting sportsmen and all
3 outdoor and wildlife enthusiasts behind the common goal of conservation. This first
4 conference was such a success that energized and motivated participants returned
5 home to organize federations in each of their states. These affiliates became the
6 backbone of NWF, and today, they return each year to NWF's Annual Meeting,
7 providing governance for the organization, as well as the vision and grassroots
8 needed to achieve our joint conservation goals. NWF continues to be the voice of
9 conservation for hunters, anglers, gardeners, bird watchers, scientists, outdoor
10 enthusiasts and families raising the next generation of habitat stewards.

11 6. Today, NWF is the nation's largest member-supported nonprofit
12 conservation advocacy and education organization. NWF has more than four million
13 members, partners, and supporters nationwide, and affiliate organizations in 48
14 states and territories, including Nevada and Idaho. NWF is headquartered in
15 Reston, Virginia, with offices throughout the United States, including regional
16 centers in Denver, Colorado and Missoula, Montana. The mission of NWF is to
17 educate, mobilize and advocate to preserve and strengthen protection for wildlife
18 and wild places. For nearly 80 years, NWF has been advocating for the conservation
19 of vital resources upon which wildlife like the greater sage-grouse depend.

20 7. As part of its mission to preserve and strengthen protection for wildlife and
21 wild places, NWF has actively worked on behalf of its members to ensure
22 conservation of America's sagebrush steppe. This iconic Western landscape provides
23 habitat for more than 350 species, including the greater sage-grouse, pronghorn,
24 mule deer and golden eagles. Many of these species are declining. greater sage-
25 grouse have lost more than half of their native habitat and their numbers have
26 plummeted from an estimated 16 million to less than 500,000. Among NWF's
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1 activities relating to greater sage-grouse, NWF has worked to secure effective
2 provisions in land use planning documents, mineral leases, drilling and mining
3 permits issued by both federal and state agencies. These provisions include buffers
4 for breeding habitats; limits on surface disturbance in breeding, brooding and
5 wintering habitats and restrictions on structures that provide perches for predators.
6 In addition, NWF has worked with ranchers on both public and private lands to
7 encourage grazing practices that conserve sage-grouse habitat, including marking
8 fences to prevent grouse losses through collisions. NWF has a fence-flagging
9 program underway to mark fences on public and private lands so as to reduce sage
10 grouse mortality through bird-fence collisions.

11 8. In 2003, three petitions were filed seeking protections for the greater sage-
12 grouse pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and in 2010, the U.S. Fish
13 and Wildlife Service determined that the greater sage-grouse warranted listing
14 under ESA. Because it is fundamental to NWF's conservation mission to prevent
15 the loss of wildlife species, over the past decade, NWF has intensified its efforts on
16 behalf of its members, supporters and affiliates to secure effective conservation
17 strategies to restore sustainable greater sage-grouse populations. This work has
18 included, but is by no means limited to the following, working with state wildlife
19 agencies and governors to adopt regulations and executive actions to improve state
20 management of greater sage-grouse and working with federal land management
21 agencies to adopt conservation measures in land use plans and other activities to
22 preserve the habitat values of public lands in the sagebrush steppe.

23 9. Since 2010, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest
24 (USFS) have amended nearly 100 land use plans to provide new management
25 direction for all BLM and USFS lands within the occupied range of the greater sage-
26 grouse (approximately 70 million acres). During the preparation of these land use
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1 plans, NWF has provided extensive comments to BLM and USFS in support of
2 science-based strategies to conserve sustainable greater sage-grouse populations
3 including the designation and preservation of priority or core habitat areas as well
4 as specific protections for breeding, brooding and wintering areas. NWF has also
5 encouraged its members, supporters and state affiliates to provide comments in
6 support of these measures and thousands of them have done so. The final Records of
7 Decision (RODs) issued by BLM and USFS in September 2015 incorporate
8 measures to conserve greater sage-grouse and their habitat supported by NWF, its
9 affiliates, its members and supporters and current science.

10 10. The BLM and USFS RODs are an essential component of an
11 unprecedented range-wide collaboration among federal, state and private
12 stakeholders that has occurred over the past five years. The RODs form much of the
13 basis for USFWS's recent determination that there are now adequate measures in
14 place to preclude the need to invoke an ESA listing and to ensure sustainable
15 populations of sage-grouse for the foreseeable future.

16 11. At NWF's Annual Meeting in March 2015, its affiliates adopted a specific
17 resolution in support of these efforts by BLM and USFS as well as states and
18 private individuals: Conservation of Sage-Grouse and the Sagebrush Steppe. This
19 resolution avers that "that National Wildlife Federation supports the efforts of
20 state, federal and private entities to conserve both sage-grouse and sagebrush
21 habitats" and further resolves that "the National Wildlife Federation calls upon
22 Congress and the legislatures in states with sage-grouse populations to adequately
23 fund conservation, monitoring, research and restoration efforts on behalf of sage-
24 grouse."

25 12. NWF has many individual members who have taken action in support of
26 the RODs, including active members residing in Nevada and Idaho. NWF has one or
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1 more active members who use BLM or USFS lands for recreational enjoyment who
2 will be injured by a ruling weakening or overturning the RODs, as Plaintiffs in this
3 case request.

4 13. Plaintiffs' suit to weaken or overturn the RODs will once again put at risk
5 millions of acres of sagebrush steppe habitat across the West. Such an outcome will
6 substantially interfere with NWF's mission to preserve and protect wildlife and wild
7 places and with its members' ability to use and enjoy these lands for hunting,
8 fishing, wildlife watching and other outdoor activities. If the RODs are weakened or
9 overturned, as the Plaintiffs in this case request, the greater sage-grouse will once
10 again be at risk of extinction.

11 14. The harm to NWF's interests can only be redressed by a decision to
12 uphold the RODs and the science-based greater sage-grouse conservation measures
13 incorporated in the BLM and USFS land use plans and formally enacted in the
14 RODs.

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16 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.
17 Executed on this 10th day of November, 2015.

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22 _____
Thomas France
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